United Nations A/69/81-E/2014/13

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 May 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session
Item 61 of the preliminary list*
Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Economic and Social Council
2014 session
Item 14 of the provisional agenda**
Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

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Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 2013/8, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, through the Council, a report on the implementation of the resolution. The Assembly, in its resolution 68/235, also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its sixty-eighth session. The present report, which has been prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, is submitted in response to the resolutions of the Assembly and the Council.

At its eightieth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination censured Israel in connection with its general recommendation 19 (1995) concerning segregation and apartheid, as prohibited by article 3 of the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Continued disproportionate use of force by Israeli security forces amounts to unlawful killings, and may amount to wilful killings in some cases. During the reporting period, 40 Palestinians were killed (including 5 children), and 3,654 injured (including 1,001 children).

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A total of 4,881 Palestinians (including 183 minors) had been detained or imprisoned by Israeli security forces by January 2014, with reported torture, ill-treatment and denial of rights.

In 2013, 663 Palestinian structures, including homes, were demolished, displacing 1,103 people. Over 1 billion square metres of Palestinian land has been seized by Israel since the onset of the occupation.

Government-supported illegal settlement expansion and the construction of the wall, which have led to "a creeping annexation", continue in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with 40 per cent of the West Bank land transferred to the jurisdiction of settlement-related councils. In 2013 there was a 123.7 per cent increase in the construction of settlement housing units.

Violence and attacks by settlers continued, with impunity. In 2013, 93 attacks were recorded against Palestinians (including children), their property and holy places.

Israeli mobility restrictions, which constitute illegal collective punishment, also persist, affecting almost all aspects of Palestinian life. These restrictions amount to a blockade in the Gaza Strip, with severe consequences on the social, economic and humanitarian conditions of its population.

Israeli measures continue to have a detrimental impact on the environment and natural resources and curtail Palestinian development and livelihood through discriminatory policies, including in access to land and water allocation; Israeli settlers consume six times more water than Palestinians in the West Bank. Ninety per cent of the water from the Gaza aquifer is not safe for drinking without prior treatment, further exacerbating the living conditions of the Palestinians living there.

The economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued its negative trend during 2013. Unemployment was recorded at 38.5 per cent in Gaza, compared to 18.2 per cent in the West Bank.

The level of food insecurity rose dramatically, affecting over 1.5 million Palestinians (34 per cent of the population), with a rate of 57 per cent in the Gaza Strip.

Almost 15,000 patients had to leave Gaza in 2013 in order to access life-saving medical care owing to the serious shortage of drugs and medical supplies. In the West Bank, Palestinian patients and their companions need special Israeli-issued permits to access hospitals in East Jerusalem.

The educational system in the Occupied Palestinian Territory requires additional facilities. The expansion of the system is restricted in Gaza because of the blockade, and in the West Bank owing to Israeli permit requirements. Palestinian students and their schools are often exposed to settler violence.

Israel continues to occupy the Syrian Golan, and is illegally expanding its settlement activities and exploiting natural resources there. Syrian residents of the occupied Syrian Golan continue to suffer from discrimination in terms of access to land, housing and basic services and water allocation.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia would like to acknowledge its appreciation for the substantive contributions of the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the League of Arab States.

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2013/8, the Economic and Social Council expressed concerns over the practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, which violate international humanitarian law. These concerns were echoed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/235. The practices included causing deaths and injuries to civilians, including children, women and peaceful demonstrators, all of whom must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law; the rising incidence of violence by illegal, armed Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and their properties; and the continued detention of thousands of Palestinians, including children and women, under harsh conditions. Of concern also to the Council and the Assembly were the accelerated construction by Israel of settlements; the construction of the wall inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory; the exploitation of Palestinian natural resources; the increased demolition of homes, economic institutions, agricultural lands and infrastructure; the revocation of residency rights of Palestinians in and around occupied East Jerusalem; and the ongoing Israeli military operations and policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including what in effect amounts to a blockade on the Gaza Strip. The Council and Assembly in their respective resolutions also highlighted the detrimental impact of Israeli practices on the natural resources and the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

2. The present note highlights the practices by Israel, the occupying Power, that are of concern to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly as reflected in the aforementioned resolutions, and that have persisted over the reporting period, 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

II. Occupied Palestinian Territory

3. Eighteen Security Council resolutions[1] reaffirm the applicability of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) to territories occupied by Israel since 1967 (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 14).

Israeli policies affecting Palestinians

4. At its eightieth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reiterated previous concerns about the general segregation of communities under Israeli jurisdiction. The Committee censured Israel in connection with its general recommendation 19 (1995) concerning segregation and apartheid, as prohibited by article 3 of the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and urged Israel to prohibit and eradicate policies or practices of racial segregation and apartheid, which "severely and disproportionately affect the Palestinian population".[2]

[1] Resolutions 237 (1967), 271 (1969), 446 (1979), 465 (1980), 471 (1980), 476 (1980), 484 (1980), 592 (1986), 605 (1987), 636 (1989), 641 (1989), 672 (1990), 673 (1990), 681 (1990), 726 (1992), 799 (1992), 1322 (2000), 1544 (2004).

[2] John Dugard and John Reynolds, "Apartheid, international law, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory", *European Journal of International Law*, vol. 24, No. 3 (2013) pp. 867-913; CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 24; see also A/HRC/25/67.

Discrimination and segregation

5. Many of Israel's policies related to settlements activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory amount to "de facto segregation". This includes cases of inequality and separation between Palestinians and Israeli settlers related to the use of roads and infrastructure or access to basic services and water resources. Such separation is concretized by the implementation of a complex combination of movement restrictions consisting of the wall, roadblocks, the obligation to use separate roads and a permit regime that only impacts the Palestinian population (see CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 24).

6. A legal regime of segregation is operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, enabling the establishment and the consolidation of settlements, whereby Israeli laws applied personally to Israelis in the West Bank give them preferential legal status over Palestinians. This violates Palestinians' rights to non-discrimination, equality before the law and equal protection of the law (see A/HRC/22/63, paras. 40 and 49). This is particularly disconcerting since recent years have witnessed racist and xenophobic acts, manifestations and discourse, especially by Israeli settlers against Palestinians (see CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 23) (see the section on settler violence below).

Zoning and planning

7. The restrictive regime for Palestinian construction in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, constitutes another example of discrimination against Palestinians (see A/68/513, para. 12). This regime and its associated planning policies render it "virtually impossible" for the Palestinian residents of Area C,[3] as well as East Jerusalem, to meet their basic housing, livelihood and development needs and rights.[4]

8. Area C, constituting over 60 per cent of the West Bank, is the only contiguous territory, owing to the fragmented nature of Areas A and B.[5] The Israeli authorities have in practice permitted Palestinian construction on lands comprising only 0.5 per cent of Area C; in contrast, construction related to Israeli settlements is allowed on 8.5 per cent of the land in Area C, while an additional 61 per cent of Area C land comes under the jurisdictional areas of the settlements' local and regional councils and can be made available for settlement planning and development in the future.[6]

9. Furthermore, Israeli authorities prevent Palestinians from developing most private lands in Area C on the grounds that they were zoned for agricultural use, whereas extensive areas of Area C have been reclassified from "agricultural" to "residential" to allow for the establishment of settlements.[7] Hence, more than

[3] Area C is the area that lies under full Israeli security and administrative control, according to the Oslo Accords.

[4] Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, citing World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the Future of the Palestinian economy", report No. AUS2922, 2 October 2013.

[5] Area A is the area where the Palestinian government is granted security and administrative control, while Area B is the area where Israel exercises security control while the Palestinian government controls administrative aspects.

[6] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[7] Ibid.

94 per cent of Palestinian construction permit applications in Area C were rejected by the Israeli authorities between 2000 and 2012.[8]

10. In June 1967, Israel illegally annexed 70 square kilometres (km^2) of land, incorporating East Jerusalem and a number of nearby Palestinian villages into the expanded boundaries of the Israeli-defined municipality of Jerusalem (see Security Council resolution 478 (1980)). It promptly built 12 Israeli settlements that virtually enveloped nearby Palestinian quarters and villages. Another outer layer of settlements beyond the municipal boundaries was also built, compromising the geographical continuity of the city — traditionally the economic, cultural and spiritual centre of Palestine — from the rest of the West Bank (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 25).

11. In addition, since the 1970s, the Jerusalem municipality of Israel has openly pursued a policy known as "demographic balance", most recently seen in the city master plan also known as "Jerusalem 2000", which calls for a 60/40 demographic balance in favour of Jewish residents (ibid.).

12. Over 35 per cent of Palestinian land in the Israeli-defined municipal area of East Jerusalem has been confiscated since 1967 for settlement use, and only 13 per cent is available for Palestinian construction. However, much of this land is already built up and the permitted construction density is limited. The difficulty and high cost of the permit application process, as well as a range of issues related to land registration, make it extremely difficult for Palestinians to obtain building permits from the Israeli authorities.[9]

13. As a result, it is estimated that at least 33 per cent of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem lack Israeli-issued building permits and are hence vulnerable to demolitions and stop-work orders, placing over 93,000 Palestinians at risk of displacement.[10]

Other East Jerusalem policies

14. In Jerusalem, displays of Palestinian political symbols have been punishable by fines or imprisonment. Israeli security forces regularly prohibit and shut down meetings or conferences held in Jerusalem that are affiliated with official Palestinian institutions or with Palestinian officials in attendance.[11]

15. Although Israeli law entitles Palestinian residents of Jerusalem to full and equal municipal and other services, the municipality of Jerusalem has failed to provide sufficient social services, infrastructure, emergency planning and postal service for Palestinian neighbourhoods in Jerusalem. In addition, bus services in Jerusalem have been largely segregated between Israelis and Palestinians.[12]

[8] B'tselem, *Acting the Landlord: Israel's Policy in Area C, the West Bank*, June 2013, p. 19.

[9] Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[10] Information from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

[11] United States Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Israel and The Occupied Territories — The Occupied Territories, available from www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=220358&year=2013#wrapper.

[12] Ibid.

Residency status

16. The right to reside in East Jerusalem was restricted to those Palestinians who were recorded as living within this expanded municipal boundary at the time of its occupation by Israel in 1967. These Palestinians were defined as permanent residents of Israel, with strict rules governing their residency status and a number of provisions allowing the revocation of this status.[13] Based on these rules, in addition to other regulations it has invoked, Israel has de facto expelled about 15,000 Palestinians from East Jerusalem so far (see A/68/77-E/2013/13).

17. The ban on granting Israeli citizenship to children born of an Israeli parent and a parent from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Israeli decision to stop processing residency applications for Palestinian children since 2000 and the revocation of residency of those living in East Jerusalem have resulted in an estimated 10,000 unregistered Palestinian children[14] being excluded from access to health services, education and any other type of social benefits. In addition, these restrictions prevent thousands of Palestinian children from living with their parents (see CRC/C/ISR/CO/2-4, para. 29), while others live with the fear of being separated because of the severe restrictions on family reunification under the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law as amended in 2005 and 2007. These laws and measures can also prevent children who have lost one of their parents from reuniting with their surviving parent (ibid., para. 49).

Excessive use of force

18. During the reporting period, 40 Palestinian civilians were killed and another 3,654 were injured by Israeli security forces and settlers throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The casualties included at least 5 Palestinian children killed and another 1,001 injured.

19. The year 2013 witnessed more than double the number of child casualties compared to 2012;[15] children account for approximately 32 per cent of those injured in violence by Israeli forces in the West Bank.[16]

20. Also during the reporting period, 2 Israeli civilians were killed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and another 134 were injured, including 2 children.[17]

21. According to Amnesty International, which investigated the shooting deaths of 25 Palestinians in the West Bank in 2013, the circumstances point to those killed having been the victims of unlawful killings and, in some cases, wilful killings; "if so, such killings would amount to war crimes".[18]

22. Amnesty International also concluded that the patterns of excessive use of force by Israeli forces have taken place with virtual impunity.[19] Approximately 94 per cent of criminal investigations launched by the Israeli army against soldiers

[13] Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[14] Defence for Children International Palestine, "Israeli law tears Palestinian families apart", available from www.dci-palestine.org/documents/israeli-law-tears-palestinian-families-apart.

[15] Information provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

[16] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Amnesty International, "Trigger-happy: Israel's use of excessive force in the West Bank" (London, 2014), pp. 10, 12, 60.

[19] Ibid., p. 10.

suspected of criminal violent activity against Palestinians and their property are closed without any indictments. In the rare cases that indictments are served, conviction leads to very light sentencing.[20]

Arbitrary arrests and detentions

23. Israeli forces, claiming security concerns, conducted 3,844 search and arrest operations in the West Bank in 2013, during which 8 Palestinian civilians were killed and another 239 were injured; 4,652 Palestinian civilians were arrested during these operations.[21] In the Gaza Strip, 11 patients and patient companions en route to medical facilities were detained at the Erez checkpoint during 2013.[22]

24. Some 800,000 Palestinians have been detained in Israel since 1967.[23] At the end of January 2014, according to B'tselem, 4,881 Palestinian so-called security detainees and prisoners were held in Israeli prisons,[24] including 183 children.[25]

25. Although Israeli law provides safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention, key safeguards do not apply to Palestinian "security detainees", who are subject to the jurisdiction of Israeli military law; Israeli military courts had a conviction rate of more than 99 per cent for Palestinians.[26]

26. Throughout 2013, a monthly average of 198 children were in Israeli military custody.[27] Notwithstanding Israel's announcements that it would take steps to address the concerns of United Nations and other entities,[28] Palestinian children continue to be routinely arrested in the middle of the night, taken hand-tied and blindfolded to unknown destinations; their parents rarely know where their children have been taken. They are systematically subjected to physical and verbal violence, humiliation, painful restraints, threats of death and other forms of violence, and restricted access to toilet, food and water. "These crimes" are perpetrated from the time of arrest, during transfer and interrogation, to obtain a confession but also on an arbitrary basis. In addition, Palestinian children are subjected to solitary confinement, sometimes for months (see CRC/C/ISR/CO/2-4, para. 35).

27. During 2013, UNICEF and partners documented 107 cases of ill-treatment of children by the Israeli security forces, including 11 cases under the age of 14.[29]

28. Arrested Palestinian children can be detained for four days before being brought before a judge. They are not always informed of their rights and confessions obtained from them under duress are used as the main evidence. Most of the

[20] Yesh Din, "Criminal accountability of Israeli security forces", available from www.yesh-din.org/cat.asp?catid=2, accessed on 27 March 2014.

[21] Information from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[22] Information from the World Health Organization (WHO).

[23] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Special statistical bulletin on the 65th anniversary of the Palestinian nakba", available from www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_nakba65E.pdf.

[24] B'tselem, "Statistics on Palestinians in the custody of the Israeli security forces", available from www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners, accessed on 24 March 2014.

[25] Information provided by UNICEF.

[26] United States Department of State.

[27] B'tselem, "Statistics on Palestinian minors in the custody of the Israeli security forces", available from www.btselem.org/statistics/minors_in_custody.

[28] Information provided by UNICEF.

[29] Ibid.

Palestinian children are accused of stone throwing, which is considered a security offence that can carry a maximum penalty of 20 years of imprisonment (ibid., para. 73).

29. At least 215 Palestinian children detained since 2009 have been transferred out of the Occupied Palestinian Territory to serve their detention and sentences inside Israel, in breach of article 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. A large number of them are detained in overcrowded cells together with adults in poor conditions, with poor ventilation and no access to natural light. Poor-quality and inadequate amounts of food, harsh treatment by prison officials and deprivation of any form of education add to their plight (ibid., para. 73).

30. The Addameer organization reported that female prisoners were also subjected to the same psychological and physical abuse as their male counterparts, such as beatings, intrusive body searches, threats and sexual harassment.[30]

31. The Public Committee against Torture in Israel reported in July 2013 that, despite having filed more than 776 complaints since 1999, no complaint of torture resulted in a criminal investigation, prosecution or conviction.[31]

32. Of continuing concern was the ongoing practice of administrative detention, which permits detainees to be held for indefinite renewable periods.[32] Citing security concerns, Israeli authorities do not afford administrative detainees an opportunity to refute allegations or access the evidentiary material presented against them in court.[33] According to B'tselem, by the end of January 2014, there were 175 Palestinian administrative detainees in Israeli prisons.[34]

Displacement, property destruction and confiscation

33. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, Israeli authorities demolished 663 Palestinian structures in 2013 (98 in East Jerusalem), compared with 604 in 2012, thereby displacing 1,103 people, compared with 886 in the previous year,[35] with refugees accounting for 34 per cent of those displaced.[36]

34. In a number of instances, the Government of Israel charges demolition fees to demolish a home. That, at times, caused Palestinians to destroy their own homes to avoid the higher costs associated with Israeli demolitions.[37]

35. Since the beginning of the occupation in 1967, Palestinians have seen over 1 billion square metres (m^2) of their land seized and placed within the jurisdictional boundaries of local and regional settlement councils (see A/HRC/22/63, paras. 63-64);

[30] Information provided by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
[31] United States Department of State.
[32] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
[33] United States Department of State.
[34] B'tselem, "Statistics on Palestinians in the custody of the Israeli security forces", available from www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners, accessed on 11 March 2014.
[35] Input provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
[36] Information provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).
[37] United States Department of State.

this includes approximately 40 per cent of the total area of the West Bank[38] (see sections above for East Jerusalem).

36. In Gaza, it is estimated that there is a shortfall of over 70,000 housing units, while 12,500 people remain displaced.[39]

37. The situation in Gaza is compounded by substandard housing; overcrowding results in the deterioration of health and hygiene conditions, in turn leading to heightened public health risks.[40]

Settlements and settler violence

38. In addition to violating international humanitarian law, the establishment of Israeli settlements, along with their infrastructure, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is leading to "a creeping annexation that prevents the establishment of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State and undermines the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" (see A/HRC/22/63, paras. 101 and 102).

39. These settlements are established for the exclusive benefit of Israeli Jews, and are being maintained and developed through a system of total segregation between the settlers and the rest of the population living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (ibid., para. 103).

40. Since 1967, consecutive Governments of Israel have directly promoted settlements, and their expansion, by means of planning policies, legalizing outposts, controlling land on which settlements are subsequently built, providing them with infrastructure and public services, granting benefits and incentives to settlers and sponsoring economic activities (see A/68/513, para. 15).

41. In 2013, the Government of Israel added nine new settlements, including three former outposts, legalized in 2012, to the 91 settlements on the list of national priority area level A, which receive the maximum benefits in all fields (ibid., paras. 24-26).

42. These policies amount to the transfer of Israeli citizens into the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is prohibited under international humanitarian law and international criminal law (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 38).

43. Data indicate that there were 563,546 settlers in the West Bank in 2012[41] living in 250 Israeli settlements across the occupied West Bank territory, including occupied East Jerusalem (ibid., para. 28).

44. During 2013, Israel started construction on 2,534 housing units in settlements in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, comprising an increase of 123.7 per cent over 2012.[42]

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[38] Input provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[39] Information provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), citing Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Protection of Civilian Weekly Report, 14-21 December 2013.

[40] Information provided by UNRWA.

[41] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, press release, 13 August 2013.

[42] Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, "Construction begun and construction completed in 2013", available from www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/tables_template_eng.html?hodaa=201404052.

Settler violence

45. Recent years have witnessed an increase in racist violence and acts of vandalism on the part of Israeli settlers targeting Palestinians (see CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 28).

46. With few exceptions, Israeli settlers who are responsible for attacking Palestinians and their property enjoy a high degree of impunity.[43] This occurs despite the fact that settler attacks and intimidation regularly take place during daylight hours; the identities of perpetrators are well known, or could easily be identified; there is usually video and photographic footage of the incident; and the frequent presence of Israeli security forces at the scene during such incidents. However, when acts of violence are committed by Palestinians against settlers, they are swiftly and effectively addressed (see A/HRC/22/63, paras. 43 and 50).

47. Thus, another form of institutionalized discrimination is noted in addressing the issue of violence. Between 90 and 95 per cent of cases of Palestinian violence are investigated and go to court (ibid.), while 84 per cent of investigations into settler attacks against Palestinians and their property (97.4 per cent of cases of vandalism of trees) are closed without indictments.[44]

48. In 2013, 93 settler attacks were recorded that resulted in injuries to 146 Palestinians, in addition to 306 attacks that resulted in damage to Palestinian private property. Another 201 Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces who intervened during clashes between settlers and Palestinians.[45] Among the casualties, 40 Palestinian boys and 9 girls were injured in settler attacks in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Most of these incidents took place when children were going to or returning from school.[46] In some cases, attacks are followed by settlers taking over land in the area of the incident and starting to cultivate it.[47]

49. During 2013, settlers uprooted 13,097 trees[48] and burned over 280,000 m^2 of agricultural and grazing land.[49]

50. Since 2008, mosques and churches have been targeted in settler attacks, including at least nine arson attacks against Palestinian mosques and 21 incidents in which graffiti were used to desecrate mosques, churches and burial grounds with provocative slogans of a racist or sacrilegious nature (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 60).

West Bank wall

51. In spite of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, of 9 July 2004, Israel continued the construction of the wall in 2013. Approximately 62.3 per cent of the wall has been completed and a further 9.1 per

[43] Amnesty International, "Trigger-happy", p. 60.

[44] Yesh Din, "97.4 percent of investigative files relating to damage to Palestinians' olive trees are closed due to police failings", available from www.yesh-din.org/infoitem.asp?infocatid=473, accessed on 27 March 2014.

[45] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[46] Information provided by UNICEF.

[47] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[48] Input from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

[49] Information provided by UNRWA.

cent is under construction, with at least 85 per cent of the route intruding into the West Bank.[50]

52. Once the wall is complete, 80 per cent of the settler population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem will live on the Israel side, in effect rendering it "a de facto annexation wall"[51] that seriously impairs the contiguity and, thus, the viability, of a future Palestinian State.[52] It would also isolate 680 km^2 of Palestinian land between the wall and the Green Line, comprising approximately 12 per cent of the West Bank, including 454 km^2 of agricultural land, pastures and open areas. The wall also isolates 37 localities and deprives more than 50,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites from the right to reside in Jerusalem. Moreover, the wall surrounds 173 localities with a population of more than 850,000 inhabitants.[53]

53. The wall obliges farmers in approximately 150 communities who have land isolated between the wall and the Green Line to use a "prior coordination" mechanism or to obtain "visitor" permits from the Israeli authorities to access their farmland and water resources, with access restricted to a designated gate.[54]

Closure policies and mobility restrictions

54. B'tselem attests that Israel's policy pertaining to the mobility restrictions is "based on the assumption that every Palestinian is a security threat ...". This "racist assumption" brings with it the violation of the human rights of an entire population based on national origin.[55] Such restrictions amount to gross violations of the economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people (ibid., para. 76).

Blockade on the Gaza Strip

55. The Israeli-imposed blockade on persons and goods imposed on the Gaza Strip since 2007[56] is considered by the International Committee of the Red Cross to be a collective punishment, in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law (see CRC/C/ISR/CO/2-4, para. 25), and having a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups and the aid agencies trying to help them.[57]

56. Categories of individuals permitted to enter or exit the Gaza Strip at the Erez crossing with Israel were largely confined to humanitarian cases and a limited number of businesspersons.[58]

57. The import of essential goods and materials for public use in Gaza remains very limited. Despite announced Israeli measures towards easing the import of construction material, only very limited volumes and types of materials are allowed

[50] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
[51] Information provided by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
[52] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
[53] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Special statistical bulletin".
[54] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
[55] B'tselem, "Checkpoints, physical obstructions, and forbidden roads", available from www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/checkpoints_and_forbidden_roads, accessed on 10 March 2014.
[56] The partial blockade had started in June 2006.
[57] Information provided by UNRWA.
[58] United States Department of State.

into Gaza,[59] which still falls significantly short of meeting the needs of the Gaza population.[60]

58. In addition to the blockade, the failure of internal Palestinian negotiations on fuel prices led to the shutdown of the only power station in Gaza,[61] and since then the power supply has been restricted to eight hours a day.[62]

59. International aid organizations, particularly UNRWA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), continued to report challenges related to the implementation of humanitarian projects in Gaza owing to significant delays and costs associated with the Israeli project-approval process and the import of materials.[63]

60. On 13 October 2013, Israeli authorities abruptly halted coordination and entry of construction material. In December 2013, coordination was made conditional upon additional measures for the control of construction material being implemented by UNRWA, which caused extra administrative and construction project costs.[64]

61. The fishing limit imposed by Israel remains at 6 nautical miles, though the most profitable fishing areas start at 8 nautical miles from shore. Fishermen continued to be subjected to shooting with live ammunition, detention, and confiscation and damaging of fishing boats and equipment by Israeli forces even while fishing in the permitted fishing zones.[65]

62. Citing militant activity, Israel also continues to impose "access restricted areas" along the Gaza borders of up to 300 m from the border fence, most of which are agricultural areas, which Palestinians are barred from entering.[66]

Movement of persons and goods within the West Bank

63. Prolonged checks and searches at some of the checkpoints, humiliating treatment by soldiers and long lines deter Palestinian drivers from using some of the roads, while some of the main roads are used almost exclusively by settlers.[67]

64. The fear of physical threats, ranging from settler violence to fear of harassment and humiliation at checkpoints, compounds the exclusion of women and girls, confining their movement and, in consequence, their access to basic services, public spaces and economic and education opportunities.[68]

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[59] Information provided by OHCHR.

[60] Ibid., citing Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Protection of Civilian Weekly Report, 1-7 October 2013.

[61] Information provided by OHCHR.

[62] Information provided by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO).

[63] Information provided by UNRWA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

[64] Information provided by UNRWA.

[65] Information provided by OHCHR, citing information from the Union of Agricultural Work Committees.

[66] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Bulletin Monthly Report, November 2013, p. 8.

[67] B'tselem, "Checkpoints, physical obstructions, and forbidden roads".

[68] Ibid.

65. By September 2013, 65.12 km of roads in the West Bank were classified by Israel for the sole, or virtually sole, use of Israelis. In addition, Palestinian motor traffic is prohibited on 6.72 km of internal roads in downtown Hebron, where some sections are off-limits to Palestinian pedestrian traffic as well.[69] The prohibition, which began in 2000, resulted in the closure of 1,829 businesses and 1,014 Palestinian housing units, according to B'tselem.[70]

66. During 2013, UNRWA faced continued restrictions by Israeli authorities in accessing refugee communities in the West Bank, with major implications for its ability to meet the humanitarian needs of Palestine refugees.[71]

Access to East Jerusalem

67. Restrictions on movement affected virtually all aspects of life, including access by Palestinians to places of worship, employment, agricultural lands, schools and hospitals, as well as the conduct of journalistic, humanitarian and non-governmental organization activities.[72]

68. Patients referred for treatment to the East Jerusalem hospitals, as well as parents accompanying ill children and hospital staff from Gaza and the West Bank, must obtain a permit from the Israeli authorities in order to access their health care or work. Twenty per cent of applicants are routinely denied, and permit holders are restricted to travel by foot across designated checkpoints. Checkpoints that are crowded and can be closed without warning also halt the direct entry of 90 per cent of Palestinian Red Crescent ambulances from the West Bank into Jerusalem.[73]

Exploitation, endangerment and depletion of Palestinian natural resources

Water

69. The Western Aquifer Basin is among the most productive water basins in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel currently controls 100 per cent of the aquifer and abstracts 94 per cent of its water, while Palestinians abstract only 6 per cent.[74]

70. Discriminatory allocation of water resources persists. Approximately 1 million Palestinians in the West Bank consume 60 litres of water per capita per day or less, significantly below the WHO recommendation of 100 litres per day, while Israeli settlers consume six times that amount. In addition, an estimated 313,000 Palestinians are not connected to a water network, which translates into enormous costs related to water purchase.[75] Settlements benefit from enough water to run farms and orchards, and for swimming pools and spas, while Palestinians struggle to satisfy their minimum water requirements (see A/HRC/22/63, para. 85).

71. The capacity of the Palestinian Water Authority to develop new water resources is hampered by the water management arrangements governed by the Joint

[69] Ibid.
[70] United States Department of State.
[71] Information provided by UNRWA.
[72] United States Department of State.
[73] Information provided by WHO.
[74] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffel), *Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.13.II.L.4).
[75] Information provided by UNICEF.

Water Committee set up in the context of the Oslo Accords, where Israel has predominance in terms of the allocation of West Bank water resources, of which it withdraws 90 per cent. A large number of Palestinian projects are rejected by the Committee. In Area C, additional approval is required from the Israeli civil administration, even for such small-scale projects as wells and rainwater collection cisterns (ibid., para. 81). As a result, wells and springs that are available to Palestinians are generally degraded, while Israel simultaneously continues to drill deeper and more efficient wells for its own use. In addition, when Palestinians do have piped water, it is often siphoned off from water points for Israeli settlements, albeit with lesser volume. The diversion points are usually placed within settlements, making them vulnerable to settlers disconnecting or shutting down the water flowing to the Palestinian villages.[76] Furthermore, in the event of a water shortage, valves supplying Palestinian communities are closed. This does not happen for settlements (ibid., paras. 83 and 84).

72. As a result, over 300,000 people are at risk of acute water scarcity, receiving supply through unreliable connections.[77] Palestinian communities in Area C have come to depend on purchasing water from Israeli private suppliers.

73. Between 2009 and 2012, 92 cisterns, 62 wells, 30 pools and 19 water tanks, 5 springs, 1 pipeline and 20 sanitation structures were demolished by Israel, and 27 water and sanitation structures were confiscated. Furthermore, of 56 water springs in the West Bank in the vicinity of Israeli settlements, 30 have been taken over completely by Israeli settlers, while the other 26 are at risk of takeover.[78]

74. The denial of water is used to trigger displacement, particularly in areas slated for settlement expansion, since these communities are comprised mostly of farmers and herders who depend on water for their livelihoods (ibid., para. 88).

75. In East Jerusalem, residency permits compound the difficulty for Palestinian Jerusalemites to connect legally to the water network because of a lack of building permits, which are almost impossible to obtain.[79]

76. Gaza relies almost completely on the underlying coastal aquifer in which salinity levels have risen well beyond guidelines set by WHO for safe drinking water. Today, 90 per cent of the water from the aquifer is not safe for drinking without prior treatment. Households in Gaza are spending up to one third of their income on drinking water. In addition, bacteriological contamination has been detected in the purchased water, putting 1,145,941 people at risk.[80]

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[76] Information provided by UNICEF, citing Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Group and Al-Haq, "Israel's violations of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with regard to the human rights to water and sanitation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", September 2011.

[77] Information provided by UNICEF, citing Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Group, Advocacy Task Force Briefing.

[78] Information provided by UNICEF, citing the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012.

[79] Information provided by UNICEF, citing Emergency Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Group, Advocacy Task Force Briefing.

[80] Information provided by UNICEF, citing August 2011 statistics.

Waste management and sanitation

77. In Gaza, huge investment in treatment facilities and associated infrastructure is urgently needed to cope with the existing demand. Operation of the systems is also currently subjected to electricity fluctuations. Some 90 million litres of raw or partly treated sewage have to be released daily into the Mediterranean Sea, creating pollution, health hazards and problems for the fishing industry.[81]

78. In the West Bank, a restrictive permit regime has prevented the development of wastewater networks. About 68 per cent of the West Bank population (1.6 million people) are not connected to the wastewater network. In the rural area, there are almost no sewer networks and the communities depend on haphazardly constructed septic tanks or cesspits that leach into the groundwater.[82]

79. An additional risk to Palestinians is the 5.5 million cubic metres (m^3) of wastewater generated every year by settlements and released into the West Bank.[83]

80. In 2013, Israeli security forces closed the disposal site of Al Bireh municipality, creating a huge environmental problem in the governorate. The Israeli authorities informed the relevant parties that the Al Minya sanitary landfill, a project funded by the World Bank and other donors, could not be opened unless it also received waste from the Israeli settlements in the vicinity.[84]

Access to land

81. In the West Bank, Palestinian farmers whose agricultural lands are located inside or near settlements face regular restrictions on access and settler attacks against them and their properties. Access by Palestinians to such land is subject to "prior coordination" with the Israeli authorities, even in cases where the land was fenced off by settlers without authorization from the Israeli authorities (A/68/513, para. 49).

82. Overall, the restricted land area was estimated to encompass 17 per cent of the total land mass of the Gaza Strip and 35 per cent of its agricultural land (see A/68/77-E/2013/13, para. 56).

Economic and social conditions

83. In a context of continued deterioration of socioeconomic conditions, the gap between increasing humanitarian needs and available funding has grown sharply during the reporting period, particularly regarding UNRWA and the Gaza Strip.[85]

The economy

84. The economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, directly and indirectly afflicted by the Israeli occupation, continued its negative trend during 2013.

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[81] Information provided by UNICEF, citing the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012.

[82] Information provided by UNICEF.

[83] Information provided by UNICEF, citing B'tselem, 2009.

[84] Information provided by UNEP.

[85] Information provided by UNRWA.

85. The real gross domestic product (GDP) of the West Bank and Gaza increased by only 1.5 per cent in 2013, according to estimates by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).[86] This continues the marked slowdown from growth rates of 12.2 per cent in 2011 and 5.9 per cent in 2012.[87]

86. The destruction of the productive base in the West Bank and Gaza as a result of recurrent Israeli military actions, restriction of movement of Palestinian workers, limitations on transport and telecommunication infrastructure, loss of sovereignty over domestic natural resources, severe constraints on international trade and use of the relatively strong Israeli currency, among other factors, have weakened the Palestinian economy. As a result, the productivity of the economy has fallen sharply, leading to a loss of competitiveness of the exporting sector. Indeed, by 2012 the exports of goods and services accounted for only 16 per cent of GDP.[88]

87. A direct consequence of the slowing economic growth is the high unemployment rate in the West Bank and Gaza, which stood at 25.2 per cent of the labour force in the fourth quarter of 2013, significantly above the rate of 22.9 per cent observed during the same period of 2012.[89,90]

88. Unemployment particularly affected specific groups of the Palestinian population: those living in Gaza (38.5 per cent, compared to 18.2 per cent in the West Bank), women (33.5 per cent), the refugee population (32.3 per cent) and youth (39.0 per cent for the population aged 15-29).[91]

89. Prolonged episodes of high unemployment and unstable working conditions will inevitably exact a high socioeconomic toll into the foreseeable future because of the resulting large-scale deskilling of workers, discouraging investment and rendering some of the workers not just unemployed, but unemployable.[92]

90. The latest poverty statistics indicate that 26 per cent of Palestinians lived below the poverty line in 2011 (18 per cent in the West Bank and 30 per cent in Gaza). The poverty rate in Gaza is much higher and the poverty gap is deeper and more severe there. This is a direct consequence of the occupation policies, which

[86] IMF, "Statement at the conclusion of an IMF mission to the West Bank and Gaza", press release No. 14/44, 6 February 2014, available from www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2014/pr1444.htm, accessed 8 April 2014.

[87] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Gross domestic product by expenditure for the years 1994-2011 at constant prices, available from www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/EXPconstant%2094-11E.htm; and Value added by economic activity and region during the year 2012 at constant prices, available from www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/GDP-%20ValueAdded2012E.htm.

[88] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Gross domestic product by expenditure and region for the quarters of the years 2011-2013 at constant prices, available from www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/GDP-EXPCon2011-2012E.htm.

[89] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (October-December 2013) Round (Q4/2013), press report on the Labour Force Survey Results, available from www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_LFSQ42013E.pdf.

[90] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (October-December 2012) Round (Q4/2012), press report on the Labour Force Survey Results, available from www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_LFSQ42012E.pdf.

[91] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (October-December 2013) Round (Q4/2013), press report on the Labour Force Survey Results, available from www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_LFSQ42013E.pdf.

[92] Ibid.

have been particularly damaging in Gaza as a result of the blockade. In fact, GDP per capita in Gaza fell from 76 per cent of the West Bank GDP per capita in 2004 to only 51 per cent in 2012.[93] The fiscal crisis of the government of Palestine is exacerbated by Israel's control over the tax and customs clearance revenue (60-70 per cent of total public revenue), which it collects on behalf of the government of Palestine in accordance with the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (Paris Protocol). Israel has repeatedly withheld this revenue, thereby creating severe difficulties with fiscal planning and leading to instability and reduced economic growth.[94]

91. The Israeli restriction on the economic activity in Area C is one of the occupation policies that most severely limit the development potential of the economy, given its territorial extension and the richness of the natural resources.

92. According to the World Bank, potential value added from easing current restrictions on access to, and activity and production in, Area C would likely have amounted to 35 per cent of Palestinian GDP in 2011. Such potential, if realized, would significantly reduce the budget deficit and would also be expected to lead to a large decrease in poverty, as a result of a 35 per cent increase in employment.[95]

Food security

93. The improvement of food security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 2009 to 2011 was reversed in 2012. Food insecurity levels rose dramatically, to reach 1,570,000 Palestinians (34 per cent of the population).[96] Overall, the deterioration in household food security reflects the worsening of socioeconomic conditions in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,[97] with an anticipated significant increase in food insecurity levels in 2014.[98]

94. In the West Bank, the "marginally secure" and "vulnerable" groups expanded, thus limiting the increase of the "food insecure" group. By 2012, an estimated 19 per cent of households were assessed as food insecure in the West Bank, indicating a lower resilience status of households.[99]

95. In the Gaza Strip, the combination of soaring unemployment, falling purchasing power and recurrent shocks has pushed the majority of the population into food insecurity. An estimated 57 per cent of households are food insecure, with food insecurity growing faster among refugees and in refugee camps.[100]

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Information provided by UNCTAD, 2013.

[95] World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza".

[96] Information provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

[97] Ibid.

[98] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Bulletin Monthly Report, February 2014, p. 3.

[99] Information provided by FAO.

[100] Information provided by UNRWA, citing Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, FAO, World Food Programme and UNRWA, "Socio-economic & food security survey: West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestine" (2012).

96. Food insecurity, affecting 23 per cent of the population, is also particularly high in refugee camps in the West Bank, compared with a food insecurity level of 18 per cent of non-refugee households in 2012.[101]

97. A fully fledged food insecurity crisis has been prevented only by the large-scale humanitarian assistance provided. Since 2000, UNRWA has spent more than $900 million in food and cash assistance benefiting the poorest refugees in Gaza, where more than 800,000 refugees now depend on the Agency's food assistance programme.[102]

Health

98. The poor quality and insufficient quantity of available water and inadequate wastewater treatment pose a major public health problem, particularly for children in the Gaza Strip.[103]

99. The public health system in Gaza remains fragile, dependent on donor aid and vulnerable to the closure of borders, restrictions on the movement of people and goods and Israeli military operations. These conditions are exacerbated by power cuts of up to 16 hours a day owing to a shortage of fuel entering Gaza.[104]

100. Almost 15,000 patients had to leave Gaza in 2013 in order to access life-saving medical care in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Israel and Egypt. The volume of permit applications through the Erez crossing increased by 48 per cent in 2013 compared with 2012, reflecting more demand owing to drug shortages and reduced access via Rafah to Egypt. Twelve per cent of applicants were either denied permits or did not receive timely replies and missed their hospital appointments. Physical and bureaucratic delays in accessing treatment and the difficulty of passage present health risks, while the serious shortage of drugs and supplies in Gaza has made referrals to medical treatment outside the Strip even more necessary.[105]

101. Gaza health authorities estimate that by 2020 there will be a need for 800 additional doctors, 700 nurses and 900 administrative staff for optimal functioning of the Gaza public health network.[106] However, permits for travel to the West Bank and East Jerusalem for training have been restricted for many Gaza health staff.[107]

102. In the West Bank, Palestinian patients and their companions also need special Israeli-issued permits to access outside hospitals. In 2013 about 20 per cent of those requesting permits were denied or delayed in accessing referral health facilities in East Jerusalem and Israel.[108]

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[101] Information provided by UNRWA.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Information provided by OHCHR, citing Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Protection of Civilian Weekly Report, 14-21 December 2013.

[104] Information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

[105] Information provided by WHO.

[106] See www.unsco.org/Documents/Special/Gaza%20in%202020%20a%20liveable%20place%20English.pdf.

[107] Information provided by WHO.

[108] Ibid.

103. Restrictions prohibiting East Jerusalem health-care institutions from procuring pharmaceuticals from suppliers in the West Bank have increased costs for hospitals in East Jerusalem.[109]

104. While Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are entitled to the health services provided by the Israeli authorities, by virtue of their monthly payments to the Israeli National Health Insurance, there are inequalities in the number of facilities available to Palestinians compared with Israeli residents of Jerusalem, especially with regard to specialized services such as prenatal and paediatric clinics.[110]

Education

105. Gaza had a high literacy rate of 96 per cent in 2011.[111] Some 463,567 children, half of them girls, were attending school during the 2012/13 school year. Notwithstanding high attendance rates, sustaining the quality of education constitutes a significant challenge, owing partly to a shortage of schools — 67 per cent of government schools and 85 per cent of UNRWA schools run double shifts[112] — and as education staff cannot receive training abroad.[113]

106. The blockade has led to the stalling of investments in educational infrastructure in Gaza, resulting in the inability to build new schools. It is estimated that 250 new schools were needed in 2012, and an additional 190 schools would be needed by 2020, in order to accommodate the increase in the student population.[114]

107. In the West Bank, particularly Area C, the seam zone, East Jerusalem and other vulnerable areas such as Hebron, students and teachers are vulnerable to harassment, threats and violence on their way to and returning from school, and at times while at school, by Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces. A 2012 assessment of 116 communities in the West Bank showed that 33 per cent of children had to travel more than 5 km to school.[115]

108. In 2013, 36 boys and 9 girls were injured, mostly in Palestinian communities near Israeli settlements and when the children were going to or returning from school.[116]

109. During the same period, there were four instances of settlers attacking schools. Another 164 incidents, attacks or threats of attacks by settlers on schoolchildren were documented, resulting in disruption of classes or delays in going to school. This included instances of physical assault on schoolchildren by settlers, evacuation

[109] Ibid.
[110] Information provided by UNICEF.
[111] Information provided by UNICEF, citing the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.
[112] Information provided by UNICEF, citing the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2012/13.
[113] Information provided by OHCHR, citing Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Protection of Civilian Weekly Report, 14-21 December 2013.
[114] Information provided by UNICEF, citing United Nations, Gaza and 2020: A liveable place?, August 2012.
[115] Information provided by UNICEF, citing Protection Cluster and Education Cluster, "Protection issues affecting access to education in the West Bank", March 2012.
[116] Information provided by UNICEF.

of schools owing to the threat of settler attacks and sewage from Israeli settlements flooding into school grounds.[117]

110. An estimated 10,000 Palestinian students in the West Bank attend classes in tents, caravans or tin shacks, with minimal protection from the heat or cold. Area C schools have poor sanitation. Inadequate water and sanitation facilities can contribute to school dropout rates.[118] The Palestinian government has been unable to obtain permits to build necessary classrooms or upgrade severely dilapidated buildings. In addition, there are 25 active demolition orders and 20 stop-work and one sealing orders for education facilities,[119] including two schools and one kindergarten.[120]

111. It is also estimated that, among other obstacles to movement into East Jerusalem, over 5,000 students face daily delays at checkpoint crossings because of permit checks on their way to school or ad hoc "flying" checkpoints being established. Children face harassment, threats and, in some cases, violence at these checkpoints. The resulting fear of harm and humiliation creates stress and fear among children and their families.[121]

112. It is estimated that there is a shortage in East Jerusalem of 2,200 classrooms.[122] As many as 90,000 school-age children in East Jerusalem do not have access to free public education. An estimated 4,329-5,300 children are not enrolled in any education institution in East Jerusalem, and the estimated secondary dropout rate is as high as 50 per cent in municipality schools.[123]

III. Occupied Syrian Golan

113. Israel continues to occupy the Syrian Golan, after it illegally announced its annexation in 1981. It is estimated that approximately 20,000 Israeli settlers live in 33 settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel continues to encourage the growth of the settler population in the Golan through socioeconomic incentives, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel also controls scarce water resources in the Golan and distributes a disproportionate share to Israeli settlements while a private Israeli company supplies water directly to Israeli settlers at preferential rates (see A/68/513, para. 53).

114. Syrian residents of the occupied Syrian Golan continue to suffer from discrimination in terms of access to land, housing and basic services, while the Citizenship Law continues to negatively impact on family ties (see CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16, para. 29). Furthermore, Israel also violates its human rights obligations, including the right of Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan to

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Information provided by UNICEF, citing UNICEF, "Bedouin schools fighting for survival in Area 'C'", September 2011.

[119] Education Cluster, Vulnerable School Matrix, 25 April 2013.

[120] Information provided by UNICEF.

[121] Information provided by UNICEF, citing Association for Civil Rights in Israel, Failed Grade: The Education System in East Jerusalem 2010, August 2010.

[122] Information provided by OHCHR, citing Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Protection of Civilian Weekly Report, 14-21 December 2013.

[123] Information provided by UNICEF.

freedom of movement and the right to an adequate standard of living (see A/68/379, para. 61).

115. Agriculture was the main source of income prior to the 1967 occupation, and is still the most important single source. However, it currently cannot sustain the population owing to discrimination in access to water as well as land, rendering farming uncompetitive and revenues from agricultural work insufficient. Employment has to be sought elsewhere, noting that prospects for the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan remain constrained.[124]

116. Syrian farmers have access to only 200 m^3 of water per dunam of land, a mere 30 per cent of the water allocated to Israeli settlements. Hence, Syrian farmers have to pay considerably more than settlers for water owing to a discriminatory pricing system. Furthermore, the settlements have privileged access to markets as they can benefit from a range of distribution and retail networks.[125]

117. Israel also continues to exploit natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan for its own benefit. In February 2013, the Israeli Ministry of Energy and Water exclusive petroleum exploration licence in the occupied Syrian Golan (see A/68/513, para. 54).

118. There have been reports that dispute Israeli claims that it lacked the resources to remove all landmines around the occupied Syrian Golan, including in agricultural land and in areas in close proximity to schools. Arab villagers in the Golan were being exposed as human shields to clear the landmines. It has also been reported that negligence by the Israeli forces in maintaining and repairing barbed wire around mined areas continued to claim the lives of children and villagers (A/68/379, para. 63).

119. Although there have been incidents over the ceasefire line in relation to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, they have not had longer-term consequences for the area so far. However, the ongoing conflict in Syria can have a further negative impact on the situation of workers and their families.[126]

IV. Conclusion

120. The Israeli occupation has entailed institutionalized discriminatory measures, including laws, policies and military orders. A number of Israeli practices, including the settlement activities, which are illegal under international law, continue to constitute an obstacle to peace and a violation of the rights of the Palestinians and Syrians living under occupation.

121. The goal remains comprehensive peace and the resolution of all pertinent issues. This can only be achieved by ending the occupation, attaining the rights of the Palestinian and Syrian populations living under occupation, the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions and adherence to international law and norms.

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[124] International Labour Office, *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*, ILC.102/DG/APP (Geneva, 2013), para. 130.

[125] Ibid., para. 131.

[126] Ibid., para. 128.